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CHRISTMAS MUSINGS

BY

GEORGE BALDWIN

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TO YOU

I have friends by the dozen, I have friends by the
score—

Friends that I know are true;
But I've room in my heart for many friends more—
Yes, plenty of room for *you!*

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CHRISTMAS MUSINGS

DOWN DE CHIMBLE-LEE TONIGHT

Let us put de fire out, Muvver,
'Cause it's gettin' awful late;
An' we'd better clean de hearth up,
It's in such a dirty state—
Ashes lyin' all around it—
We mus' clean it dood an' bright.
Dear ol' Santa Claus is comin'—
Down de chimble-lee tonight!

Hang my stockin' up, dear Muvver,
Not too far away from me.
Leave a little light a-burnin',
So as Santa Claus tan see,
When he looks in froo my window
I'll be sleepin' dood and tight.
Den he'll bring me lots of presents—
Down de chimble-lee tonight.

Down De Chimble-Lee Tonight

When you hang my stockin', Muvver,
Stretch de top out, big an' wide;
'Cause you know it's awful little,
An' der' ain't much room inside.
Santa's dot so much to bring me,
Airship, choo-choo train, an' kite.
Won't he hab a time a dettin'
Down de chimble-lee tonight?

Put me in my bed now, Muvver,
'Cause I've dot to do to sleep;
Musn't make no noise or nothin',
Dasen't even take a peep.
Dat don't matter—in de mornin'
I'll det up before it's light.
Den I'll see what Santa brings me—
Down de chimble-lee tonight.

CHRISTMAS CONFIDENCES

Sonny:

I want to talk to you, Muvver,
So take me on your knee.
Dere's sumpin' I'se dot to ast you,
And you must answer me.
It's Chismus day, in de mornin'.
And I'se all excited bec'os
All day today I'se been wondrin'
And finkin' of Santa Claus.

Mother:

Yes, sit on my lap, dear Sonny,
I will listen to what you say.
And tell everything that you ask me,
If it's something I can or may.
Yes, tomorrow, dear Sonny, is Christmas,
And you're all excited because
You can't help wondering and thinking
Of merry old Santa Claus.

Christmas Confidences

Sonny:

When you was a wee little dirlie,
And Papa and Uncle was boys,
Did he tum around den every Chismus,
And bwing you all candy and toys?
And Ganpa and Ganma before you,
And uzzar old ladies and men,
When dey were dust little chil'ren,
Did Santa Claus tum around den?

Mother:

Yes, when I was a wee little girlie,
And daddy and uncle were boys,
He came around then every Christmas,
And brought us all candy and toys.
When grandpa and grandma were children,
And other old ladies and men,
And their grandparents before them—
Yes, Santa Claus came around then.

Christmas Confidences

Sonny:

And where does he det all de pweasants
Dat he's always so willin' to gib?
And where on earf does he tum from,
Where does ole Santa Claus lib?
Sister she tol' me dis mornin'
He libs eber so far away.
But, somehow, he teeps on abwingin'
His pweasants on Chismus day.

Mother:

Just where he gets all his presents
Is something I cannot tell.
Perhaps he goes out and buys them
For the children he loves so well.
Some say he lives in a palace,
Some say in a fairy den.
But I think he lives in a corner,
Way down in the hearts of men.

Christmas Confidences

Sonny:

And he gibs away dollies and engines,
Candy and most anyfing.
How does he know where we're libin',
And how does he know what to bwing?
Why don't he tum in de daytime,
And det awound while it is light?
Us chil'ren would all like to see him,
But he neber dets here till it's night.

Mother:

On a Reindeer Sleigh he travels,
All covered with bells that ring.
And the angels take him the message
To whom and what to bring.
But he doesn't come round in the daytime,
Because that isn't his way.
He wants to surprise little children
When they get up, on Christmas day.

Christmas Confidences

Sonny:

And der's one fing more, dear Muvver,
I want you to answer me.
If he tame awound when you were little
How old tan Santa Claus be?
Will he die sometime, dear Muvver,
Like all uzzer very old men?
Co's if he does, I'se awonderin'
Who will be Santa Claus den?

Mother:

Yes, longer than I can remember,
And years before I was born,
Santa was bringing his presents
For people on Christmas morn.
He's a very old man, I know it.
But he's healthy, strong, and spry;
And long as the world keeps going
Santa will never die.

TICKETY TOCK

On the mantle there stands a beautiful clock,
Which makes a big fuss with its "tickety tock;"
Its case made of marble, its trimmings of gold,
Its minute and hour marks illumined and bold.
Its works so designed that, when striking the time,
It always begins with a musical chime.
And then in a clear and resonant ring,
It peals off the hour, with its "Ding, Ding, Ding!"

But somehow or other, this beautiful clock
Is never quite right with its "tickety tock."
It's sometimes too fast, then again it's too slow,
And it often entirely refuses to go.
You may oil it and wind it as much as you will,
The pendulum stays quite rigid and still.
Then, all of a sudden, the striker will ring
The musical chimes, and the "Ding, Ding, Ding!"

Tickety Tock

But there on the desk is a wee little clock,
That steadily sings, "tick, tickety tock."
Its case is of nickel, its trimmings of brass,
Its figures are covered with commonest glass.
Its works are not fashioned for striking the time,
Nor is it equiped with a musical chime.
No bells are there, for the hammer to ring
And call out the hour, with a "Ding, Ding, Ding!"

But somehow or other this wee little clock
Is always just right with its "tickety tock."
It's never too fast and never too slow,
Lay it upside down and still it will go.
This way and that way, the pendulum sways,
Ticking the minutes, the hours, and the days.
Oil it occasionally, wind up the spring,
It will measure the time, but it wout "Ding, Ding."

Tickety Tock

There are plenty of men, like the beautiful clock,
Who make a big fuss with their "tickety tock."
To outward appearance fine folk they may be,
Clothed in fine raiment for others to see.
They may give you a handclasp, and bid you the
time,
Their voices may sound with a musical chime.
Of their wonderful doings, they eternally sing,
And ring their own bells, with a "Ding, Ding,
Ding!"

But somehow these men, like the beautiful clock,
Are a fake and a sham, with their "tickety tock."
Their clothes and their manners are fashioned to
hide
The very poor works that they cover inside.
And as for results, so uncertain are they,
One cannot rely on a thing that they say.
Their honey-sweet words have a very false ring,
And they're apt to deceive, with their "Ding, Ding,
Ding!"

Tickety Tock

And then there are men like the wee little clock,
Who are steadfast and true, with their "tickety tock."
Their clothes may be shabby and grimy with soil,
Their hands may be knotted and horny with toil,
Their voice may be heavy, their speech may be
rough,
Their general appearance be homely and tough;
But the things that they do have a wonderful ring,
And they conquer the world, with their "Ding, Ding,
Ding!"

Then give me the men, and the wee little clock,
Who keep up their ticking, "tick, tickety tock."
I care not for plumage or colorings gay,
Or any conventions that stand in the way.
The men and the clocks who are always on time,
Are seldom attuned to a musical chime.
They steadfastly work, while others may ring,
Their paeans of praise, with a "Ding, Ding, Ding!"

LOVE SONGS

YOU LOVE ME, DEAR?

You love me, Dear? Ah yes! I know.
Nor need your tongue your love express,
For all your looks and actions show
And your great love for me confess.
The light that shines within your eyes
Like crystal drops of morning dew
Or sparkling diamond, never dies
Nor ever needs be lit anew.
The heartening handclasp, when we meet,
That thrills my body through and through;
The cheerful smile with which you greet
Whene'er I come to visit you,
The fervent kiss, the fond caress
Bespeak your love so strong and true
And fill my heart with happiness.
You love me, Dear; I know you do!

You Love Me, Dear?

You love me, Dear? Ah yes! I know
Your precious heart beats true to mine
And, though you need not tell me so,
No words sound sweeter, more divine.
And though our paths may scattered lie,
And I from you must absent be,
'Tis good to know as time goes by
I still am kept in memory.
You hold no sacrifice too great
To make my happiness complete,
Nor do you halt or hesitate
To take the bitter with the sweet;
And, knowing this, how can I be
But ever faithful, loyal, true?
Eyes would be blind, that cannot see
Even as you love, so I love you.

MY HILDA

Maid of the glist'ning eyes,
Bright as the sapphire skies,
Magnets alluring me,
Drawing me on to Thee,

My Hilda!

Boldly, I'm sending you
This message strong and true,
I love you, can't you see?
Say, dear, you'll always be

My Hilda!

Maid of the laughing face,
Lighting the darkest place,
No matter where you be,
Somehow I always see

My Hilda!

Dark clouds may hover by,
But, dear, if you are nigh,
Clouds cannot bother me,
Light radiates from Thee,

My Hilda!

My Hilda

Maid with the tuneful voice,
Bidding my heart rejoice,
Each night in dreams I hear
You calling me, my Dear—

My Hilda !

My heart breaks into song
Ever the whole day long,
Knowing I soon shall be
Closer, my Dear, to Thee—

My Hilda !

FRIENDSHIP POEMS

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

Love is oft a wild emotion,
Reckless as a troubled sea;
Friendship is a sweet devotion,
Full of trust and loyalty.
Love is turbulent and jealous,
Love can sometimes doubtful be;
Friendship true is steadfast, zealous.
Never ending constancy.

Take my hand then, take it, hold it;
Look into mine eyes and see.
Poet yet hath never told it,
What true friendship means to me.
All the sadness, all the sorrows,
That are mine will softened be.
I shall see some bright tomorrows
While I have a friend in Thee.

Oh the comfort, oh the pleasure,
We can to each other give,
Sharing each in fullest measure
Joys and trials while we live.
Give me friendship, I'll discern it,
Treasure it as priceless gold.
Give me friendship, I'll return it,
If I can, a thousand fold.

FRIENDSHIP'S MESSAGE TO A YOUNG FRIEND

Could I but put my words to song
Of tuneful melody,
I'd sing of thee the whole day long,
Wherever I might be.
By breezes soft, o'er vale and hill,
I would this message send—
Forget me not, for I am still
Thy loyal, trusting, friend.

Could I but tell thee as I ought
Just what thou art to me,
Could I express my sweetest thought,
How happy I should be.
O'er vast expanse of ocean wide
I would this message send
Upon the roaring, rolling tide—
I'm still thy loyal friend.

Could I but hear thy voice reply,
Could I but hear from thee
Our friendship, friend, shall never die,
I, too, will constant be.
Again by breezes, soft and mild,
I would this message send—
I'm glad to know, my darling child,
We call each other *Friend*.

NATURE POEMS

PALMETTO BEACH

Down on the beach where the palmettoes grow,
Near the beautiful river May,
Down where the salt sea waters flow,
And the salt sea fishes play,
Where soft zephyrs blow from the ocean blue,
And the sun shines brightest and best,
And the birds of the forest are calling you,
This is the place for rest.

Down on the beach where the palmettoes grow,
By the beautiful river May,
I hear the call and I want to go
And dip in the silver spray.
And the song of the waves when the tide is high
Is a song that will never cease,
And the breezes say, when they gently sigh,
This is the place for peace.

Down on the beach where the palmettoes grow,
Along with the live-oak trees,
And the gray moss festoons swing to and fro,
Touched by the ocean breeze,
The children can play in the big trees' shade
When the sun shines high above,
And the love-lorn swain may talk unafraid—
This is the place for love.

MY MOTHER'S GARDEN

On a bright sunny morning, the middle of May,
Through an old-fashioned garden, I wended my
way;

'Twas a garden my Mother had fashioned and made
Long, long years ago, with shovel and spade.
And I thought, as I gazed on the glorious scene,
What a wonderful gardener my Mother had been,
And as a reward for her vigil and care
There were flowers for herself and plenty to spare.

What a riot of color was here displayed;
There were roses of almost every shade,
There were roses half open, vigorous and strong,
And young tender budlets just coming along,
And then, as if anxious their part to fulfil,
A border of violets, blooming still,
Though not very tall, just covered the ground,
And scattered their fragrance all around.

There are pansies here in their own little space,
Each flower resembling a beautiful face;
And as I stooped closer, their beauty to see,
I fancied these faces were looking at me.
And here, to my left, in their own little bed,
Are the dear English daisies in white, pink, and red;
And there, to my right, as bold as you please,
Is a wonderful row of fragrant sweet-peas.

My Mother's Garden

And still something else in this garden I see,
Blue cornflowers blooming abundant and free;
Sunflowers and hollyhocks, not yet in bloom,
Are getting quite tall and calling for room.
The balsams and wallflowers are doing their best
To give the ten week stocks no rest.
The iris and lilies both strive to engage
The eye of the radiant scarlet sage.

The white candytuft is blooming quite fine,
And sticking quite close to sweet columbine;
The bachelor-buttons and baby's-breath
Are crowding the mignonette nearly to death.
Snapdragons are hustling and seemingly think
They are having a race with the old-fashioned pink;
The canterbury bells are growing with phlox,
Near bright portulaca and gay four-o'clocks.

Black-eyed Susan is the next flower I see,
Nodding her head and winking at me;
The windflower blows his fragrant breath,
And tickles the Marguerites nearly to death.
The asters are young but exceedingly bold,
And are stealing the room from poor Marigold;
While there snug and close to the garden wall
Are plenty of mums to bloom in the fall.

My Mother's Garden

But wait just a moment, there's more to be told!
The longer I tarry, the more I behold.
Right here in a corner, is Love-in-a-Mist.
And lots of Old-Maids who've never been kissed.
This seems rather funny, for just now I found
A lot of Sweet-Williams a-hanging around.
Perhaps when they're gone and out of the way
The Poppies will pop the question some day.

And now, little flower, I've found you at last,
A gentle reminder of days that are past,
And Mother, I fancy, is working right here
As she did on the day she planted you there.
Yes, yes, I distinctly remember the day
She plucked you and gave me one little spray,
For her sake alone I love you a lot
My sweet Myosotis, forget-me-not!

WISTARIA

Wistaria, Wistaria,
I love thee, oh thou wondrous vine.
I love to see thy branches twine;
From mother earth to topmost bough
Thou climbest, though I know not how.
I only know thy tendrils cling,
Without the aid of wire or string,
To tree or trellis in thy way,
Thou holdest strong, from day to day,
Wist, Wistaria.

Wistaria, Wistaria,
Thou wondrous plant of Orient fame,
I love the mention of thy name.
From out the window of my room
I see thee now in springtime bloom.
How gracefully thy festoons swing
In pendant fashion from each limb;
Thy fragrant odors by the breeze
Are wafted through the leafy trees,
Wist, Wistaria.

Wistaria

Wistaria, Wistaria,
Oh purple flower of pastel shade
By that Supremest Artist made,
What tender message thou dost bring
When winter days give way to spring.
Thy bowers and garlands oft suggest
To weary folk a place of rest,
And lovers offer hand and heart
While Cupid shoots his little dart,
Wist, Wistaria.

Wistaria, Wistaria,
The songbirds seem to catch the spell
And sing their songs of love as well,
The robin and the cardinal
With tuneful lay their mates enthrall.
The mocking-bird doth sing for hours
As if enchanted by thy flowers.
Ah yes, he sings both night and day,
And this is what he seems to say:
Wist, Wistaria.

THE OAK TREE'S REBUKE

“Can you tell what is wrong with my big oak tree?”
My neighbor recently asked of me.
“Its leaves are falling, its twigs are dry,
And I very much fear it is going to die.
I gave it a thorough inspection today,
And find that its bark is peeling away.
And I’ve worried about it the whole day long,
If you can, sir, tell me, just what is wrong.”

I went with my neighbor, and looked at the tree,
But just what was wrong, was a myst’ry to me.
If it wasn’t dying, it was awfully sick,
And we’d have to do something and do it quick.
And while we stood planning, my neighbor and I,
I fancied I heard the old tree sigh.
And the sigh was a message, “I’ve suffered so long,
Listen, I’ll tell you myself, what is wrong.

“’Tis more than a century since I was born,
When I started my roots from a small acorn.
Rich was the soil I grew upon,
’Twas the very same spot which is now his lawn.
There were other trees, bigger and taller than I,
And a nice little stream went wandering by.
And the world was a fairy-like place to me,
When I grew in the shade of my Mother-tree.

The Oak Tree's Rebuke

“So I grew on each summer, and every fall
I scattered my leaves, both big and small.
And other trees scattered their leaves around,
Till they lay a foot thick, and covered the ground.
Then a few months later the leaves would decay,
And mix themselves in with the sand and clay.
Nature’s provision, that there always should be,
Plenty of food for every tree.

“So I grew on apace, till the fateful day
When men came and chopped the big trees away.
’Twas a terrible time, and I often recall,
How I shivered and shook when I heard them fall.
How frightened I was, when I heard the thwacks
On my Mother-tree, from the glist’ning axe.
But they never stopped chopping, till every tree,
Was gone from the grove, but poor little me.

“Nor was that enough, the murderous brutes
Came back again later, and took out the roots.
They raked up the leaves, and took them away,
Leaving nothing to mix with the sand and clay.
Then they leveled the ground with a scraping pan,
And filled up the stream, where my water ran.
They measured the land, and at various spots,
Put little white stakes, for building lots.

The Oak Tree's Rebuke

And then the very next thing I knew,
On the self same spot where my Mother grew
They built a mansion, both big and swell,
The one in which he and his family dwell.
And they laid out gardens, and planted flowers,
And they worked and watered these things for hours.
But I was so tall then and big, you see,
That nobody thought of watering me.

“His great grandfather came with his bride,
How great was his pleasure, how great was his
pride
When he showed and gave her the house for her own,
And told her the names of the flowers now grown.
And I got so excited, when she pointed to me.
And said ‘Oh, my dear, what a wonderful tree!’
And I never forgot the answer he made,
‘It is a rare tree, and we need it for shade.’

“Then I felt much better than ever before,
I had tasted of praise, and hungered for more.
And I vowed there and then, that I ever would be
An amiable, loving, protecting, big tree.
And they built a nice bench in the cooling shade
That the length and breadth of my branches made,
And many a secret entrusted to me,
Which I never could tell—I was only a tree.

The Oak Tree's Rebuke

“Then a few years later, when children came,
I witnessed many a childish game.
And once, I remember, while little ones played,
I saw a young gardener kiss the maid.
’Twas a new sight then, but many a swain,
Has done the same thing, again and again.
I have never been sorry I happened to be,
A big, luxuriant, strong oak tree.

“And then I have witnessed much sadder things,
The wailing and weeping that death always brings.
Many a solemn funeral march
Has silently passed ’neath my drooping arch.
But I have stood on, in the self same place,
Alone, all alone, in my own small space.
Such times were always quite lonely for me,
For no one thought then of the big oak tree.

“Then, all of a sudden, the scene was changed !
And many a wedding has been arranged.
For lovers would fancy that no one could see.
Just what might happen ’neath the big oak tree.
But I think I’ve behaved, and I’ve been very good,
For I’ve kept these secrets as a big tree should.
Protector alike for the young and old,
Though I’ve often been asked, I never have told.

The Oak Tree's Rebuke

"I have sheltered the nests of many a bird,
From my every branch have their songs been heard.
The squirrels have scampered from bough to bough
And never have stopped, they are scampering now.
The hoot owls hoot from my shelter at night,
Their voices are bad, and their music's a fright;
But still, after all, they are company for me,
A great big, helpless, lonesome old tree.

"I know I have been a handsome oak tree,
But just how it happened, I never could see.
He never has wasted a single breath
To keep me from thirsting, or starving to death.
The soil that I live on is barren and sour,
And my rootlets are brittle and losing their power.
And though I am hungry as any could be,
The food that I need is ne'er given me.

"All through my top, there is wire after wire
That frequently stings and sets me on fire.
My wood has been hacked and torn apart,
But he never soothed my bruises' smart.
I know he was warned, but he heeded not,
And the rains have started these wounds to rot.
I hate to complain, but he plainly should see,
Some of the things that are wrong with me.

The Oak Tree's Rebuke

"Tree butchers have hammered and chopped at me,
But I've never been pruned as I ought to be.
My trunk is covered with many a sore,
And into my bark vile insects bore.
But what has he done, sir, tell me, pray,
To kill these insects or drive them away?
Nothing, so far as I may see—
He's simply forgotten his big oak tree!

"Now all at once he sees his mistake,
And seems quite willing some effort to make
To heal up my wounds, to give me a spray,
To find all my troubles and drive them away.
He has been very thoughtless, but he wants me to
live;
If he nurtures me now, I will freely forgive.
He will find me responsive, and I'll certainly try,
For I'm quite fond of life, and don't want to die."

We talked it all over, my neighbor and I,
And I told him the message I heard the tree sigh.
I told him to fertilize, prune, and to spray,
And he went right to work that very same day.
And the tree gets plenty of water, now, too;
For he put six-inch tiles for that to run through.
And it proved beneficial, and, what is still more,
The tree drinks and thrives even more than before.

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